

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 18, 20 – 32, and 34 – 38 are pending in the application. Applicants cancel claims 37 and 38 without prejudice or disclaimer, reserving all rights to file a divisional application based on one or more of canceled claims 37, 38 at a future date.

ALLOWED CLAIMS

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1 – 18, 20 – 32, 35 and 36 remain currently allowed.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103

Claims 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,804,267 to Long et al. Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Long. Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,580,752 to Amrany et al. Applicants cancel claims 37 and 38 without prejudice or disclaimer, and respectfully traverse the rejection as to claim 34.

Claim 34 is currently rejected as being obvious in view of Amrany. Amrany is based on U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/111,512, filed on December 8, 1998. The present application claims priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 10-172464, filed on June 19, 1998. Accordingly, under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e), 103(a) and 119(a), Amrany may be disqualified and removed as a prior art reference against the present application. In accordance with 35 U.S.C. § 119(b)(3), Applicants enclose a certified English translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 10-172464, and respectfully request that the rejection as to claim 34 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1 – 18, 20 – 32, and 34 – 36, consisting of independent claims 1, 17, 18, 20, 31, 32, and 34– 36, and the claims dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas J. Bean
Reg. No. 44,528

CUSTOMER NUMBER 026304

PHONE: (212) 940-8800/FAX: (212) 940-8776
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